

the INQUIRER

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voice of British and Irish Unitarians

Free Christians

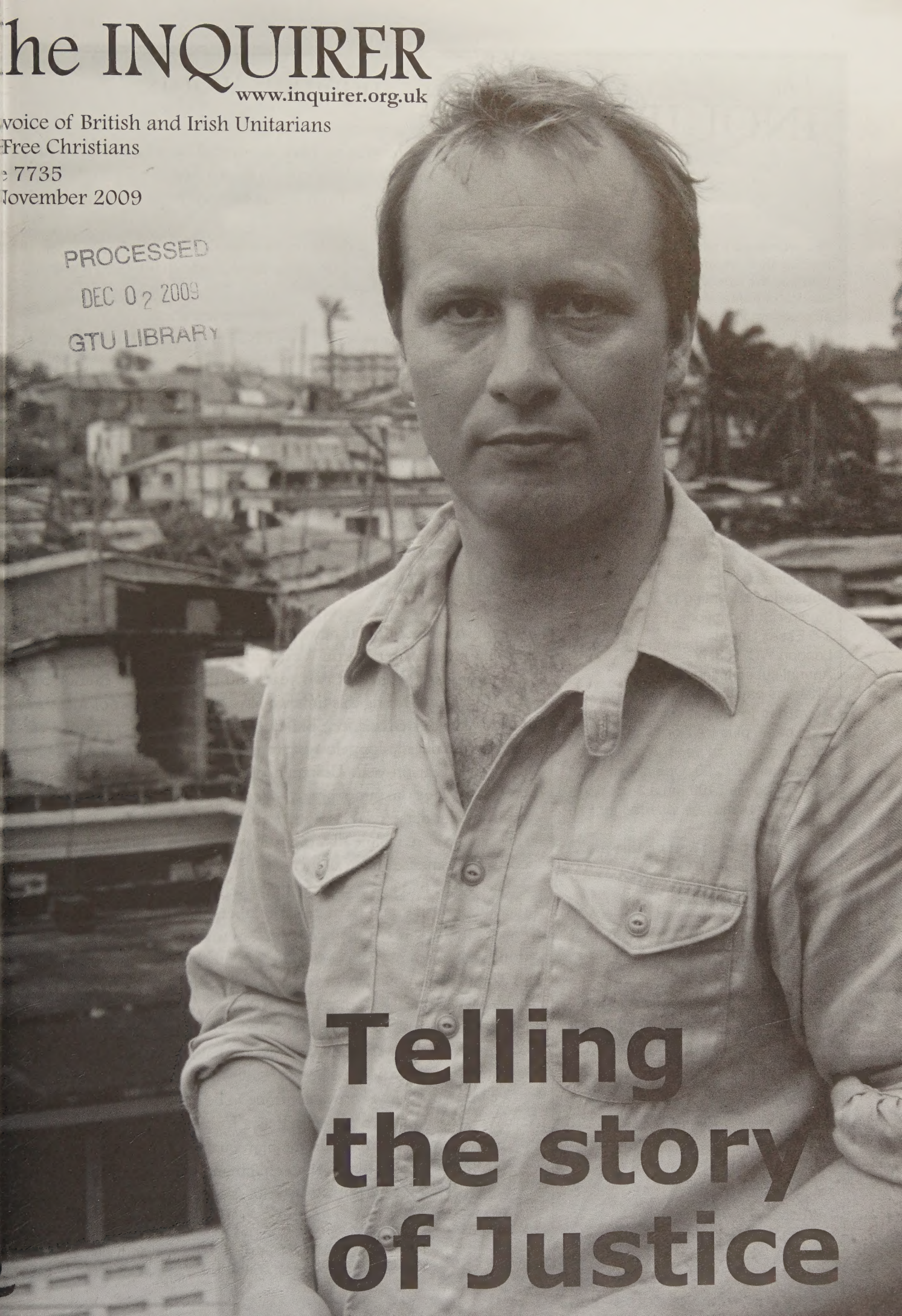
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**Telling
the story
of Justice**

The INQUIRER

THE UNITARIAN AND FREE CHRISTIAN PAPER

Established 1842

The Inquirer is the oldest

Nonconformist religious newspaper

"To promote a free and inquiring religion through the worship of God and the celebration of life; the service of humanity and respect for all creation; and the upholding of the liberal Christian tradition."

*From the Object passed at the
General Assembly of the Unitarian and
Free Christian Churches 2001*

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Inquiring Words

Let us reflect upon our gathering.

Let us celebrate what we have discovered already, and let us be grateful for what we have not yet discovered.

Let us contemplate what it is that we need to find during this hour.

Let us remember all those previous occasions when our needs have been met, especially when we thought that would have been impossible.

Let the air and the fire of the Spirit renew the water of our souls, and let the presence of each of us create the community in all of us.

Amen

— Michael Killingworth

Posted on the new page of worship material on the national web site:

www.unitarian.org.uk

Editor's View

Tough choices for survival

We heard some difficult news at the *Inquirer* Board meeting in October. Our treasurer Martin West said the publication has been running at a loss for the last two years and things simply cannot continue this way. During this time we have tried a number of measures to increase our circulation, but the number of subscriptions – reflecting the decade-long downward trend in the denomination – has decreased year-on-year. Unitarian organisations, districts and congregations face the same threats – declining numbers and increasing costs. So, understandably, donations have gone down too. But all that has occurred while outgoings have gone up – postage, printing costs and expenses have all increased.

The Board had some choices to make, knowing that the future of the publication could be at risk. Members decided regretfully to increase the *Inquirer* cover price from 70p to 80p. Individual subscriptions will go from £25 a year to £29 annually. The discount offered to congregations which order bulk subscriptions of five or more copies will decrease from 20% to 10%.

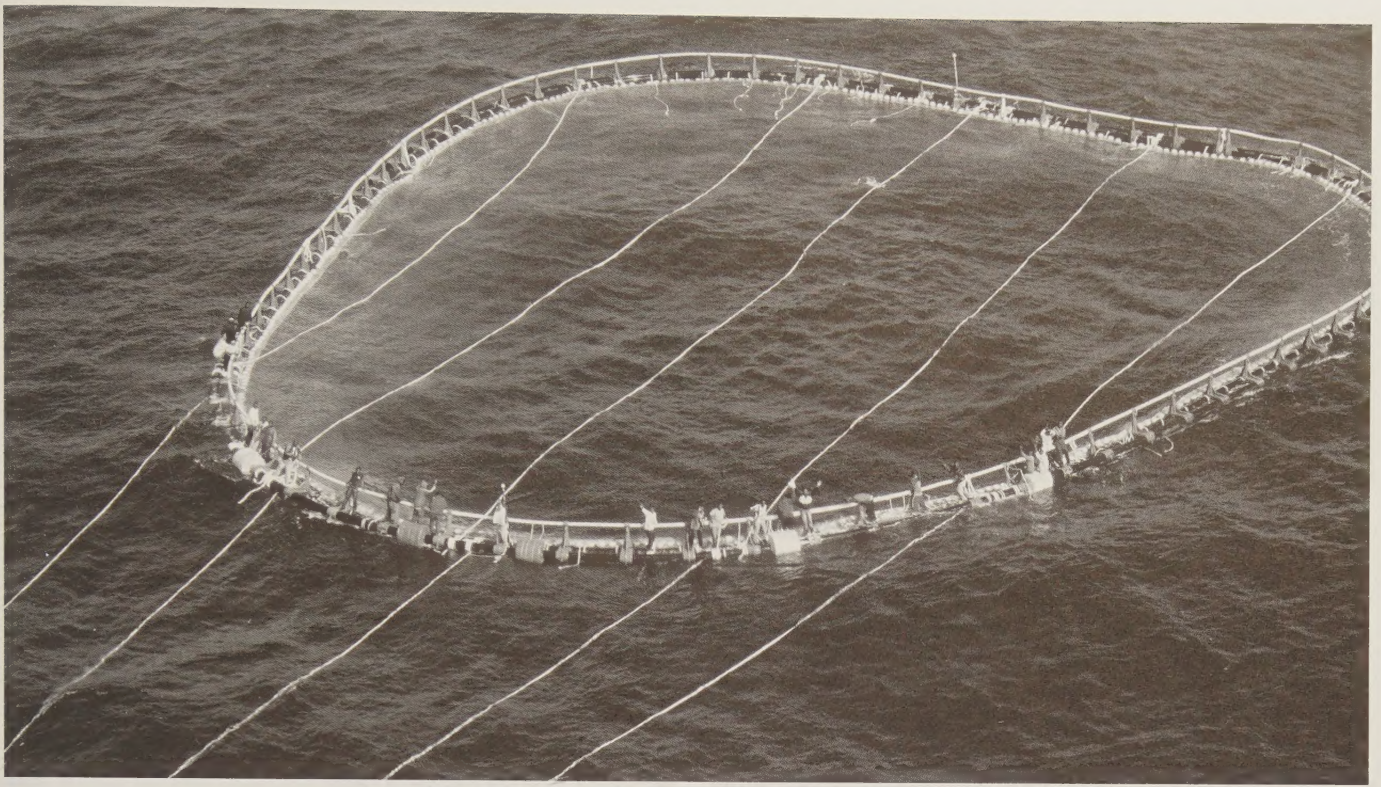
It was a difficult decision, particularly knowing that with the state of the economy many people now are having to be more careful about their own expenses.

We believe *The Inquirer* will continue to be good value for the money. We are determined to retain it as a fortnightly publication. I will continue to work to maintain the high quality of the magazine. I am grateful to the contributors who enlighten, educate and surprise me with their views. I hope our subscribers see it that way too.

MC Burns

Editor

The Inquirer



Justice – clinging to life

Reporter for BBC's *Panorama*, **Paul Kenyon** wrote 'I Am Justice', the story of a Ghanaian immigrant who clung to a tuna net for days (above) after the boat he was on capsized. Here, Paul tells why this was the book he had to write.

An award-winning journalist who has worked for almost 20 years across BBC News and Current Affairs, Paul was the first reporter to film Iran's secret nuclear sites, making an hour-long documentary which was shown around the world. Paul currently works on 'Panorama' and he became friends with Justice Amin while researching a two-part story on African migrants for the programme in 2007.

You have covered so many stories over so many years, what drew you to Justice's story? Why was this the one you wanted to do a book about?

The story had so many themes, so many twists and turns, I couldn't wait to start writing it. It occurred to me early on, when I was filming the journey for BBC *Panorama*, that if any of these events had befallen someone from the UK or America, it would have been splashed across every newspaper and TV bulletin in the world. Yet, here was a situation where 40,000 people a year were trying to cross the Sahara on foot, and then being herded onto makeshift boats to cross the Mediterranean, and no-one seemed to care.

It was as if, because they were migrants, their stories were somehow less valid. For a while I toyed with the idea of hiding Justice's ethnicity, and the reason for his journey, until the end of the book. I still wonder what the effect would have been. Would it have altered the readers' response to Justice if they thought he was a middle-class teenager from the home

countries? When they discovered the truth about him, would they be less concerned about whether he managed to survive? I'm afraid I believe that even the most liberal-minded reader would have struggled not to be slightly deflated, to feel that somehow the stakes were lower than they originally thought.

The abundance of death and the reaction to it also fascinated me. Everyone I met who'd attempted this journey had lost friends or family along the route. Some had been left behind on the desert crossing: no-one waits for the injured or the less-fit when trying to cross the Sahara with just a few litres of water. Others had hidden themselves under the bodies of their dead friends to shelter from the sun, or tossed them overboard into the Mediterranean, or searched their pockets for money.

I was also drawn by the religious themes. When the men were facing death on their makeshift boat, they had nothing left but their faith. Some were Christian, others Muslim, and several believed in Juju. But they sang and prayed together as the fear settled over them, and when they were on the cusp of death, stripped of everything they had, their beliefs were distilled down to a shared faith, a kind of emergency faith, intense and simplified, without the clutter of ceremony and ritual: a belief in a superior and benevolent force which had the power to answer their prayers.

What do you hope readers will take from Justice's story? Is there anything about immigration/immigrants that you especially hope readers will understand better as a result of reading this book?

I wanted to give a face and a personality to a constituency of people who Europe largely vilifies and treats as outcasts. A friend said his 15-year-old son read the book, and remarked, 'Hey, Justice is cool, if he was at my school he'd be one of my mates.' It's our similarities I wanted to highlight – irrespective of race or religion, the notion that we are all tied together by a series of core attitudes and values.

(Continued on next page)

Border controls not the answer

(Continued from previous page)

I also wanted readers to understand the enormous risk these people are prepared to take, and for what? The survivors usually end up homeless and jobless, living on the fringes of society, rarely fully part of it. They know there's a high chance they'll die trying to reach Europe, but in the end many decide they'd rather be on the bottom of the pile here, than at the top in their home country.

What do you think is the most common misperception about asylum seekers held by people in the United Kingdom?

That they are here to claim benefits. In all my research I have never spoken to a migrant who has even heard of payouts by the British government. For those who do want to come to Britain, it's usually because they speak English (from former British colonies across Africa for example) or that they already have family here. One also told me that he thought Britain was crime-free. Having said that, most on the route that Justice took are aiming for Italy. It's worth bearing in mind that even Malta accepts more migrants per head of the population than the UK.

If you could wave a wand and make changes in UK or European immigration policies, would you? What changes would you make?

The solution isn't in creating more border controls. Immigration policy must be closely linked to foreign investment, so there is a reason for migrants to stay in their home country. Ghana, where Justice is from, has just struck oil, a major field. I mentioned this to one of the migrants, and asked 'shouldn't that bring change?' He replied 'We've had gold for centuries, and hard woods, and cocoa for your chocolate, but all the money seems to go abroad.' We need to make sure it stays in Africa.

If readers are moved by Justice's story is there one thing they can do to help him or others like him?

Justice and the other key character in the book, Godwin, both live in Italy. Godwin is particularly vulnerable, and has not worked. He speaks Italian and English, and if anyone has connections in Italy who might be able to provide work, than that would change his life beyond measure, as it would for

Justice too. Both have work permits.

The international stories you do take you to places of grinding desperation. Is it a difficult transition when you come home?

I live in West London, and when the taxi drives me back from Heathrow everything seems so unnecessarily manicured and fussy: well-dressed people lounging outside cafes drinking cappuccino, flower beds planted in meticulous rows, cars all washed and polished. The trees on Chiswick High Road look like they've been clipped into perfect tree-shapes. I'm afraid I sometimes want to shake people, particularly if they complain the weather's been a bit damp, or that so-and-so's getting paid more than they are, or that they must have some Jimmy Choo shoes. But it wouldn't be helpful, or polite, and the feeling soon fades.

Does your Unitarian background/faith play a part in your work? If so, how?

When I was growing up, our minister John Allerton would draw from Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam as well as Christianity. Wherever I'm reporting from, I feel some spiritual link, some inclusion in other people's faith.

Recently I was filming in the Sahara, when we came across the fresh dead bodies of two young men, empty water bottles by their sides. They'd been attempting the same migration route as Justice, and fallen just a mile or so from an oasis. The Libyan border patrols watched from a nearby rock as we filmed. When the camera was off I called over and asked them to come and say a prayer for the dead men. They laughed and shouted back 'how do we know what religion they were. We are Muslim, maybe they were Christian.'

I'm glad my faith doesn't discriminate, that it's inclusive and tolerant. I said a prayer instead, whilst the guards wandered off to find the next body.

Paul Kenyon's book *'I am Justice'* is available at www.amazon.co.uk It is due out in paperback in January.

To read a sample chapter, go to: www.rbooks.co.uk/product.aspx?id=1848091451 then click on 'Open the Book'

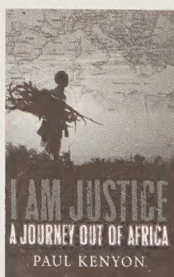
Review: 'Justice' doesn't flinch

'I Am Justice'

Review by Jeffrey Lane Gould

Unitarian Paul Kenyon is a BBC journalist who has recently launched his first book, inspired by his work on a 2007 television documentary on African migrants. *I Am Justice, A Journey Out of Africa*, tells the true story of one man's epic travels from his native Ghana to the perceived wealth and employment of Europe. Written in a straightforward and accessible style, the book is a superb introduction to citizens of the developed world to the aspirations and legends that motivate illegal migration. Kenyon's passion for his subject (and the plight of the many people who attempt this and similar journeys each year) is evident on every page of the book, not because the prose is flowery and flamboyant, but because it is so accurate and unflinching in its presentation of the details of such a journey.

From Ghana to Burkina, through Niger and Algeria, and even-



tually to Libya, the reader follows the efforts of the main character to establish links with individuals who will arrange for sea transport to Italy. The drama of the book arises not so much from the end result of one man's travels, but more from the disillusionments, pitfalls and cruel twists of fate that anyone encounters who seeks to improve one's life through economic migration. This is an excellent text to read for those members of our affluent society who resent migration to the European Union as a threat to that body's harmony. For anyone who is concerned with global development issues, it is a personal testimony that bears reading.

I Am Justice, published by Preface (an imprint of The Random House Group), 2009, £16.99, ISBN 978-1-84809-145-0

The Rev Jeffrey Lane Gould is minister at Bury Unitarian Church.

EC reverses meetings decisions

By MC Burns

In a reversal from what they approved previously, Executive Committee members of the General Assembly decided not to make changes in the Annual Meetings format in 2010. They also cancelled the international speaker who had been engaged to speak at Nottingham in April.

In an article published in 14 November *Inquirer*, Annual Meetings Panel Chair David Usher wrote that Business Sessions would be broken down by content, with dedicated sessions for reports, EC proposals and a motions section – rather than having those elements scattered across the sessions. The Annual Meetings Panel also proposed that parallel sessions be organised during the voting meetings for attenders who are not delegates.

The latest decision by the EC is that the business sessions will be conducted as they have in recent years, with a mix of resolution votes, debates and reports in each section. A 'Key Points' memo published in sponsored space below outlines the votes passed at the 9 November EC meeting.

A proposed innovation which raised strong objections was one which limited organisations' slots to one hour. The Annual Meetings Panel also sought to scrutinise proposed programmes in an effort to ensure top-quality offerings. But some societies raised strong objections. In a letter to *The Inquirer*, the Women's League announced that its members would not participate in the Nottingham meetings because the organisation was allocated a 9 am slot of only one hour – making it difficult for members who planned to come for the day. The Unitarian Women's Group also queried the rescheduling of

society slots since the early start would necessitate the provision of overnight accommodation for an outside speaker, thereby incurring expense.

The society slots will revert, now, to the previous system of either 40-minutes or 90-minutes and will be offered throughout the day.

Keynote Speaker Dr David Baum, a management consultant, speaker and author will not be coming to the meetings.

The reversal of the changes, which had been approved by the EC when the Annual Meetings Panel submitted its report in July, prompted all of the volunteer members of the Annual Meetings Panel – including David Usher – to resign.

In a statement posted on the national website, Executive Committee Convenor Peter Soulsby said: 'While recognising the importance of change and of making the meetings attractive to still more members, we are very aware that such change must be done in a way that is sensitive to the affiliated bodies and the many volunteers who are such an essential part of our denomination. Significant change must be made by general consensus and with as much notice as possible.'

MC Burns is editor of The Inquirer.



David Usher resigned from panel

GA-sponsored announcement

Key Messages from Executive Committee

Key Messages from Executive Committee of the General Assembly, meeting in Manchester on 6/7 November 2009:

In regard to the 2010 Annual Meetings, it was decided that:

- The Meetings should be organised in such a way that affiliated organisations, Commissions and Panels are enabled to participate in a similar way to previous years.
- That a detailed programme of the Business Sessions be subject to further discussion and approval by the Executive Committee.
- That the successful "Celebrating our Congregation" slots are facilitated at the Meetings.
- That we as an Executive Committee ensure there is an opportunity at the 2010 Annual Meetings for wide-ranging discussions on the changes suggested by the Annual Meetings Panel for future Annual Meetings.

Other key points:

1. The EC has nominated the Rev Dr Ann Peart to be the next GA Vice-President (to go for approval to the 2010 Annual Meetings).
2. The theme of the 2011 Annual Meetings will be: "Valuing and supporting our volunteers".
3. The General Assembly accounts project an overall loss for this last financial year (till end September) of £20,000, as predicted.
4. £1,800 was granted to the Youth Programme from the Millennium Fund for a pre-Annual Meetings preparation weekend.
5. £5,000 was granted to the Annual Meetings Panel from the Millennium Fund to enable young adults (18-35 age group) to attend the 2010 Annual Meetings.
6. The process of awarding Honorary Membership to be reviewed.
7. The proposal to have a "Change of Gear" regarding fundraising will be discussed further and put to the 2010 Annual Meetings.



A Summer S

This year's Hucklow Summer School was the biggest ever. A few of the 59 participants share a little of their experience.

A first-timer...

Friends from Essex Church had been trying to persuade me to go to Summer School for several years but I was reluctant. I had visions of a slightly religious cruise where you are stuck with a rigid timetable and a set group of people. This year, however, I took the plunge and decided to go. I was going to say that I wished I had gone earlier but I think it was the right time. I now know quite a few Unitarians from across the country and it was great to meet up with many of them at Great Hucklow.

I had also not really appreciated that – as this is a Unitarian event – it's impossible to rebel against forced activity. If you don't want to attend something – don't! The motto of my engagement group was 'whatever works for you!' In the end I rarely retreated to my room and thoroughly enjoyed spending time with fellow seekers. The theme talks each morning were inspiring and a great encouragement to continue on the pilgrim way. The engagement group I attended each morning looked at various spiritual practices and reminded me that all activities can become spiritual if approached with intention and mindfulness.

As this was also my holiday, I decided to opt out of most of the afternoon activities and spend them sitting in the sun, drinking tea, knitting and making and renewing friendships. For anyone not sure about summer school I would certainly say 'give it a go!' I thoroughly enjoyed it and returned spiritually and physically refreshed.

David Francis Darlin

Second time around...

This was my second time of attending Summer School. On the first occasion I had doubts about whether this event was for me but I am now so glad that I gave it a second try. It was so good to connect again with long-standing Unitarian friends and acquaintances from around the country, but what was even better was meeting relative 'new grown' and enthusiastic Unitarians.

The week's theme was 'The Journey' – mornings were pretty serious with theme talks by the Rev Sarah Tinker, assisted by a different person each day telling something of the journey of their life – such fascinating variations. Sarah then posed deep questions arising from the morning and we worked in twos and threes to seek our own answers. The remainder of the morning was spent in engagement groups, working on aspects of our individual life journeys, all looking towards what we aspired to for the future.

Afternoons and evenings were spent in more leisurely pursuits and activities, with a whole range of options, both indoor and out, to offer. The days could be as full as one wished – the programme commenced with meditation at 7.30 am preceding breakfast and finished around 10 pm after epilogue, but inevitably conversation for some continued in the lounge until the early hours – lots of stamina was certainly required for those going the 'whole hog'.

At this moment in time, it seems to me that this ranked among the best weeks of my life so far – it would have to be good indeed to better it in terms of mental, physical and spiritual stimulation. I thoroughly recommend it to all Unitarians. Certainly my kind 'holiday' – lots and lots of 'doing' – wonderful!!!

Joyce Ashworth

pool journey

Children's group...

I didn't know what to expect, but it was really fun and different to anything I'd done before. I was surprised at how many people came from far away places and it was really nice meeting new people from different congregations. The activities in the afternoon were brilliant. I especially enjoyed felting and games. Breakfast was really yummy and I loved the bacon. It was fun playing on the swings with Lauren, Danny, Clare and Sarah. We had a great time. I'd like to go to Summer School again.

Lizzie Baumberg (aged 10)

Summer School team...

How do I sum up this year's Summer School, and do it justice, in a few words? That is a question I don't know the answer to! But I will certainly try my best. The theme this year was 'The Journey' and it most certainly was a journey for me. I arrived on the Saturday afternoon, weary, after leading FDA ('Five Days Away') the previous week, and I left revitalised, with a clear outlook and ready to face any challenges that life may throw at me.

With a very mixed, packed timetable, we never had an opportunity to be bored. There were always activities to be involved in, that appealed to the many different characters present, whether it be drama, walks, prayer workshops or art activities to name just a few. None of them appealed to you, the lounge was always buzzing with general conversation. The long days came to an end so peacefully with beautiful epilogues to send us off to our beds.

This year's participants were from many different areas of the country, a mixed range of ages, and we all had different Unitarian experiences. This ranged from lifelong Unitarians, to one who had only walked into a Unitarian Church eight months previously, which added to the depth of conversations and the safe, secure and trusting atmosphere created in the Nightingale Centre.

Overall, Summer School was an absolute joy to be a part of. It was an opportunity to feel safe, secure, and supported to explore your own personal journey, wherever that may take you. Although the days are busy and long, you still have the space you may need to refresh and charge your batteries. Finally, there is always somebody willing to listen to anything you want to discuss. I would most definitely commend it to others as it is an experience that should not be missed; some would say it can be life-changing. As the old saying goes, you need to see it to believe it, so I hope to see you next year. I will most certainly be there. I just hope I have done the week justice as I can't quite put into words the most amazing experience I had there.

Claire Maddocks

(Co-leader of the Children's Programme)

For more information about Hucklow Summer School, and audio downloads of the theme talks, visit the summer school website: www.hucklowsummerschool.org.uk. Look out for details of the 2010 event later in the year.

Photos counter-clockwise from top left: Lizzie Baumberg photo by Jim Blair; Joyce Ashworth and John Harley photo by Ned Prideaux; Sarah Tinker with the children, photo by Anna Sherman; Labyrinth photo by Ned Prideaux; (l-r) Eloise Williamson and Claire Maddocks photo by Jim Blair; (l-r) Sonya Richards, Caroline Blair, Margaret Pyle and Jim Blair.



Welcome newcomers with gentle warmth

By Bob Pounder

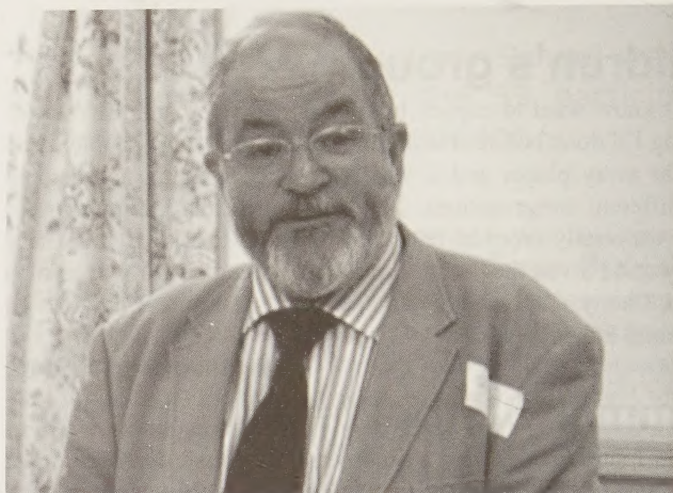
Executive Committee member, and keynote speaker at the Unitarian Renewal Group Day Gathering at Dunham Road, Unitarian Chapel, Altrincham, Jim Corrigan spoke to the theme of Gentle Transitions: *Welcome and Worship in the Unitarian Congregation* on Saturday 3 October.

In a speech that was conciliatory, inspiring and appreciatively well received, Jim gave clear, inclusive, expression to the ideals of welcome in the Unitarian congregation.

In his opening remarks, Jim made it clear that he was speaking in a personal capacity, not as an EC member and that in relative terms he was still a 'newcomer' to Unitarianism. Remembering his first visit to Golders Green Unitarians with his wife, Jane, he recalled her lack of enthusiasm for religion when she told the minister, the Rev Feargus O'Connor, that she was 'sceptical.' Feargus replied, 'Ah, but we love sceptics here'. This response may not have convinced Jane but she was in no doubt, according to Jim, that she had received a welcome from the heart. 'A welcome attuned to the person approaching, and coming from the heart of the welcomer. Spontaneous is best,' said Jim.

However, since appearance is important in forming a good first impression on chapel visitors Jim went on to make a number of good house-keeping tips, as well as an emphasis on the quality of welcome, consideration for the visitor and not least the quality of worship. All of these are, of course, essential and integral elements in the stages of introduction and the presentation of the Unitarian community to a new attender.

Responding to concerns about the continuing use of the Lord's Prayer in many Unitarian churches and chapels and the remaining prevalence of the liberal Christian tradition, Jim responded by saying that, 'In churches where it had been dispensed with there was no evidence that such a policy had resulted in a corresponding growth in membership or attendance. 'The answer however, is not simply to hold on to 19th century liberal Christianity but rather to heed the words of Art Lester, who at the 2008 Anniversary Service of the General Assembly spoke about the need to put God back into our services.'



Jim Corrigan recalled at the Unitarian Renewal Group meeting that he is new to Unitarianism.

Reflecting also on the words of the Rev Linda Hart he said, 'She makes the point that unless we touch people in their deepest selves, reach them in their heights and depths, we cannot expect them to remain in the congregation. 'Such insight should help answer the dilemma of how we reconcile our theological diversity,' he continued. 'In a way that when we do talk of God or The Divine, we need to do so in a way that is accessible to all. He reminded the Unitarian gathering, 'That since Unitarianism holds no particular position on the nature of The Divine, we need to emphasise our tolerant approach.

'We need to see our congregations grow; we need to welcome people so that they will want to join us, and stay with us.

Jim finished by saying, 'Our review of welcome and worship is not an opportunity to concentrate on our differences, but more a question of how can we reach people in their depths and how can we use creativity, metaphor and myth in this quest? These are the challenges.'

Bob Pounder is a member of the Oldham Chapel.

Susie Orbach to speak at Newington Green

Susie Orbach has been named the Richard Price Memorial Lecturer at Newington Green Unitarian Church, in Mary Wollstonecraft's 250th anniversary year. The lecture will take place on Wednesday 27 January, at 7.30 pm at the church, on the north side of Newington Green, London N16.

Susie Orbach is a psychotherapist, psychoanalyst, writer and social critic, whose first book, published in 1978 was *Fat is a Feminist Issue*. Her most recent book, published this year, is *Bodies*.

'We are thrilled to have Susie Orbach here when we are celebrating our feminist heritage,' said Guy Bentham, chair of the congregation. 'This church has a claim to be the birthplace of feminism, because of its link with Mary Wollstonecraft. But we want this to be a living link, not just a historical connection.'

Susie Orbach said she was honoured to have been asked to give the lecture, which she has titled 'Frankenstein's Bodies Today' with a nod to Wollstonecraft, whose daughter, Mary Shelley, wrote the original *Frankenstein*.

She said 'I will be looking at the ethical dimensions of today's relentless assault on our bodies. I will question the rhetoric of empowerment and liberty that are promised if the individual can produce the perfect body and I will argue for a sustainable body from which we can live freely.'

Tickets for the lecture are available in advance, from Ticketweb via the church's website at www.new-unity.org or by calling 08444 771000.

— Guy Bentham



Susie Orbach (c) Carolyn Djanogly/IMAGE magazine.

Send a child to Hucklow, please

By Peter Godfrey

The trustees of the Send a Child to Hucklow Fund met at Great Hucklow on Saturday 7 November for their Annual General Meeting. All of the arrangements for the holidays are managed from this single meeting each year. Reports at the meeting showed, once again, how valuable the holidays are for 'children in need'.

The Fund provided eleven holidays in 2009. Children came from Bolton, Mansfield, Nottingham, Manchester, Stalybridge, Blackburn, Wigan and Liverpool (four groups).

Income was a record sum of £35,856. This includes a one-off sum of £10,000 from the closing down proceeds of the Liverpool Domestic Mission. Interest, dividends and reclaimed income tax brought in a further £9632. Other particularly generous donations came from the Joseph and Ann Slater Memorial Fund, the Gorse Bank Trust, the Toy Trust and Mr AB Isaac. We received a donation of £230 from Samuel Laycock School in Stalybridge, one of the schools whose pupils benefit from the Fund. We received generous donations from several congregations and over £150 from the congregation at West Kirby where thirteen people gave via Gift Aid, increasing the value by 28%. There were no legacies this year. We received £170 in memory of Elizabeth Ainsworth, Simon Barlow, Sylvia Francis, May Joy and Donald Wright.



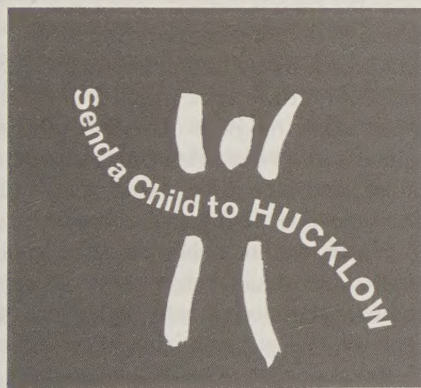
Some of the children who went to Hucklow enjoyed going on outings. Photo courtesy of SACH

Expenditure totalled £53,617 of which £52,390 was spent on the children's holidays and £1280 (2.39%) on administration and publicity.

Very many thanks to the fund's many supporters. Your support for the 2010 holidays will be deeply appreciated.

The Rev Peter B Godfrey is chairman of the Send-a-child-to-Hucklow Trust.

The Send-a-Child-to-Hucklow Fund



There were eleven holidays in 2009. The children's descriptions of what the holidays meant to them are deeply moving.

***Thank you for helping to make these holiday possible.
Please help us to continue giving needy children a country holiday.***

Your gifts in 2008/2009 amounted to the excellent and record sum of £35,856. This included £10,000 from the Liverpool Domestic Mission. **Very, very many thanks.**

Your gifts for the 2010 holidays will be as deeply appreciated as ever. **Our target is £30,000 for direct donations. It costs approximately £250 per child and we hope to send two hundred children in 2010.**

Gifts will be gratefully received by the Hon. Assistant Treasurer, Rev. Chris Goacher, 24 Arlington Drive, Derby, DE24 0AU. Please note that the Fund can reclaim income tax paid by any individual (as long as s/he has paid income tax) if a Gift Aid Donation form has been signed. **Please note** that this is now a vital part of the fund's income. Please help in this way if you can. A copy of this form will be inserted in a December issue of *The Inquirer*, or may be obtained from Mr. Goacher. Giving with a Gift Aid Donation form makes a gift of £20 worth £25.65 to the Fund.

The Fund is a registered charity number 271585. All gifts are used for the holidays except for gifts in memory of someone that are put into a Capital Account and the interest is used for holidays. Please remember the Fund in your will. Legacies are a much appreciated and valuable income.

Copies of the report and appeal may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary Rev Ernest Baker, 145 Tullibardine Road, Sheffield, South Yorks., S11 7GN, telephone 0114 266 1070.

Letters to the Editor

Annual Meetings already feel tired

To the Editor:

I was very pleased to read David Usher's article in the *Inquirer* of 14 November about changes to the Annual Meetings. I think he made a good case for the changes needed, and I know from conversations with Joyce Ashworth how impressive the Canadian meetings have become. At least one society colleague had been encouraged by the article to consider attending the meetings for the first time!

Imagine my displeasure and surprise when I then receive a letter from the EC saying they have backed down. I don't really think we have years and years in which to make changes, and last year's meetings in Chester already had a feel of tiredness and sameness about them. I plan to attend Nottingham out of sheer loyalty, but with less enthusiasm than I'd hoped.

Adrienne Wilson

Member of Godalming Unitarians
meeting at Meadow Chapel

Having faith in climate change

To the Editor:

In 2007, I asked whether Climatology is a science or a religion (*The Inquirer*, March 10). A recent ruling by Mr Justice Michael Burton states that a belief in man-made climate change, if genuinely held, is capable of being a philosophical belief for the purpose of the 2003 Religion and Belief Act. It thus appears that personal convictions on the physical causes of climate change may no longer be challenged, and should be treated as respectfully as a religion.

For what it's worth, my own interpretation of the evidence relating to climate change is that although carbon dioxide is implicated in the control of global temperatures, sequential equal increments of this gas in the atmosphere give progressively less warming.

Depending on conditions, many other factors (e.g. cyclical or random interactions between solar activities, cosmic ray and particle fluxes, water vapour and cloud formation, Earth's orbital perturbations, continental plate movements, volcanic activity, ocean and air current oscillations, etc.) can exert a much greater influence on climate, often to the detriment of human survival (see, for example, Professor Ian Plimer's book 'Heaven

and Earth. Global warming: the missing science' (2009; 2311 references)).

My own experience of the agricultural sciences informs me that CO₂ is an essential food for plants (not a pollutant), and that it is commonly added to the air of commercial greenhouses (1,000 ppmv) to raise crop yields. Any politically enforced reduction in atmospheric CO₂ concentrations by the UN may therefore be expected to reduce plant growth and food production at this time of malnutrition in the third world, rapidly growing human populations, global cooling, and widespread habitat destruction. Is such a policy ethically defensible?

It appears to me that politicisation of the science of Climatology could lead to the revival of a 'Lysenko'-style philosophy (which did such terrible damage to the science of Genetics, plant breeding, and human nutrition in the Soviet Union). Better that we concentrate our efforts on countering pollution, conserving natural resources, protecting human and wildlife habitats, and alleviating the worst of the suffering associated with inevitable changes in climate.

VC Mason

Member of Old Chapel
Great Hucklow

Name issue calls for sensitivity

To the Editor:

As others have written in *The Inquirer*, I agree that changing the movement's name will do little to bring about growth. Nevertheless, the debate has raised issues about Unitarian identity and co-existence of different beliefs. To be 'Unitarian' has traditionally represented an almost unique rejection of conventional trinitarian theology. This uniqueness is no longer the case, as is shown through the burgeoning movement for Progressive Christianity. The 'Free Christian' element of our name can be a beneficial marker to those Progressive Christians, who critically engage with their beliefs, but may still be comfortable with the language or theology of trinitarian Christianity.

Some Unitarians come to the movement and choose not to affirm Christian beliefs, however, including those seeking to leave behind profoundly negative experiences of Christian churches. While Unitarian Christians

rightly seek to raise their profile in a highly diverse movement, some sensitivity is required when arguing why all Unitarians should associate themselves with a movement which includes the word 'Christian' in its name.

Timothy J Moore

Stockport

Name change debate could drive us GAGA

To the Editor

Ken Howard's letter (*Inquirer*, 17 Oct.) setting out his concerns about a possible organisational name change deserves to be taken seriously. It's clear the idea is being interpreted by some as an attempt to take the 'Free Christian' phrase out of our title. I don't believe that is the main driver for change but I understand the fears being expressed. There are three options as I see it. The first is to leave 'GAUFCC' unaltered. Ken seems to acknowledge that this is far from ideal by proposing a name change himself at the end of his piece. The second is to allow the debate to degenerate into a theological squabble about the words behind 'UFC' and whether each is needed. There is a risk of dividing our movement unnecessarily by failing to practise the respect for difference which is at the heart of our religious outlook. Unitarian pluralists and Unitarian Christians alike have to be alive to this danger all the time. Discussing shortening our organisational title shouldn't operate as some kind of half-baked proxy Objects process about our theological centre of gravity. Our ongoing internal dialogue is too important to be done this way.

The third option then is to be more modest and recognise the opportunity of an organisational name change as a necessary tidying up exercise – appreciating that the journey of working through living with diversity is the day to day challenge and reward of belonging to our unique movement. When it comes to 'GA' then I think we should ask some hard questions. I've been on parade to varying degrees in the movement for 25 years and I have yet to come face to face with 'General Assembly'. It's fair to say that this military gentleman's failure to help project our national association is driving some of us 'GAGA'. It's time to give him his marching orders.

Matthew F Smith

Enfield

Editor of 'The Unitarian' will be missed

Frank Hytch
1929-2009

It is with great sadness that we record the sudden death of Frank Hytch on 8 November at the age of 80. He had been feeling unwell for some time and was admitted to Dudley Road Hospital some weeks ago.

Frank was born in Leicester in March, 1929 where his father worked for the Inland Revenue. But this was a career which entailed regular moves to different parts of the country, and Frank's own career would follow a similar peripatetic pattern. He attended school at Wallington in Surrey, where his precocious talent led to the award of a Scholarship to Wadham College, Oxford at the age of 17, mingling with such fellow undergraduates as Tony Benn and Roy Hattersley. Frank graduated in Politics, Philosophy & Economics at the age of 20 and he and Jean were married in 1950. Those were the days of universal National Service and Frank found the prospect of the higher pay and terminal bounty offered to those who chose instead to volunteer for regular service, very attractive, because it would enable him to purchase a home at the end of his service. He therefore volunteered for a Short Service Commission in the RAF and during the next seven years served in Germany, Northumberland, and Bridgnorth.

He then joined the Civil Service as a graduate trainee in the Ministry of Labour, where his hard work and ability led to rapid promotion. He went on to serve as Manager in Charge at Labour Exchanges in Wolverhampton and Worcester before joining the Industrial Relations Service which in 1974 became the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Services – ACAS for short. The following year the new Enterprise became part of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and was organized into several very large districts within the United Kingdom. Frank was appointed to manage the Wales Region and as he was by then living in Moseley, had to spend a great deal of time travelling. He was then promoted yet again to run the vast Midland District with its headquarters in Birmingham where he rapidly earned the respect of the leaders of both the Employers and the Trade Unions, on one memorable occasion dealing with Unitarians representing each side!

Frank joined The Church of the Messiah in Broad Street during the ministry of Hilton Birtles and remained a member when the congregation reverted to its original name of Unitarian New Meeting and moved to the present premises in Ryland Street. He soon became a member of the Vestry Committee and served as Congregational Secretary for over 25 years, interrupted only by a two-year spell as chairman. Dynamic leadership was never Frank's style, but his equable temperament and willingness to see both sides of an argument was always a calming influence in congregational affairs. His unremitting dedication and skill in quietly carrying out the basic tasks essential to the success of the congregation earned him the love and respect of all. For many years, he combined the role of Secretary with management of the church lettings which made such a valuable contribution to its income.

Frank was generous too with his time in contributing to many other areas of the Unitarian Movement. He served on the Executive Committee of the Midland Union – as it then was – for several years and became its President in 1989-91.

He was a staunch supporter of the Unitarian Church Music Society, working with David Dawson. David and his wife also have happy memories of meeting Jean and Frank at the Unitarian Family Holiday Conferences held at Great Hucklow and Peter Hewis tells of how Frank and his family volunteered to help him run a London Send a Child to Hucklow week at Great Hucklow.



Frank Hytch

Frank was also a strong supporter of The National Unitarian Fellowship and for several years in the 1990's also organized the Annual Conferences of the Unitarian Society for Psychological Studies. Frank held firm views about life after death and at the 1995 Conference, when President of the Society, he gave a major paper on 'The Supreme Adventure', Crookall's seminal book on the subject.

He was a Trustee of the Hibbert and Gregson Trusts from 1986 to 2003 and participated in several research projects with them.

He was Life Governor of Manchester College Oxford and regularly attended the Annual meetings of friends and governors.

Frank succeeded Alan Curren as Editor of The Unitarian Magazine in 1996 using his wide knowledge of Unitarian affairs to make every edition both interesting and challenging. He was a self-professed technophobe and relied heavily on Jean's computing expertise to meet the technical demands of modern publishing, editing his final edition in October, 2009.

He was a GA Recognised Lay Preacher and preached tirelessly in churches and chapels throughout the West Midlands for many years where his addresses were deeply appreciated. One hearer speaks of Frank as 'an interesting and eloquent preacher' who 'will be sorely missed, a true voice of reason'.

As well as their shared interest in music, Frank and Jean were keen Bridge players and took part in Bridge tournaments as far afield as Anglesey. Their younger son Michael died in a tragic motor cycle accident many years ago, but Frank is survived by Jean, his daughter Tessa, his son Christopher, his grandchildren Max, Leo and Giles and his brother David and his family. We offer them our sympathies in their loss.

Frank Hytch was a man loved and respected by all who knew him and he will be sadly missed.

— Sandy Ellis

One hearer speaks of Frank as 'an interesting and eloquent preacher' who 'will be sorely missed, a true voice of reason'.



The Rev Eric Jones is presenting his newly published book 'The Good Ground' to Elin Jones, Welsh Assembly Member for Ceredigion and Agricultural Minister of the Welsh Assembly Government. The launch of the book coincided with the visits of both the GA and Women's League Presidents, the Rev Bob Wightman and Mary Wightman to Wales and to Capel y groes chapel in Ceredigion at the end of October.

Also included in the photograph is County Councillor Haydn Richards, newly installed President of the South Wales District Association. Cllr Richards is also a member at Capel y groes and is currently chair of the Trustees. Elin Jones AM was born and bred on a farm next door to Capel y Groes.

The book gives a brief history and coloured photographs of all the Unitarian chapels in Wales and is available from the Rev Eric Jones at 14 Clifton Street, Aberdare, Mid Glam, CF44 7PB or email: eric.ann.jones@gmail.com The price is £5. A review of 'The Good Ground' is planned for a later issue of *The Inquirer*.

Harmony with the Divine

A West Gallery Music Association-style choral workshop and concert will be held on 23 January at the Church of the Divine Unity at Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

As part of the 70th anniversary of the present Unitarian Church in Ellison Place, there will be a workshop of choral singers and orchestral instrumentalists, leading to a short concert that evening. Leaders will be Paul Gailunas and Chris Gardner.

The lively psalmody, hymnody and anthems of the Unitarian and related traditions from 1660 to 1850 will be rehearsed from 10 am, in preparation for the 6 pm concert, which will finish by 7.30 pm. Non-performers are welcome to attend the concert at which there will be a retiring collection for 'Age Concern: Learning and Leisure'.

It is essential to book in advance. Application forms for participants can be had from early December, these to be returned by 8 January. For more information, contact Chris Gardiner on 01207 563778 or Win Stokes on 0191 257 5918 or email: win@clarence8.fsnet.co.uk

This event is supported by West Gallery Music Association.

Communicators to gather in February

There is no requirement to be a Newsletter editor, nor a webmaster, not even an officer on a congregational committee, in order to attend the UCCN (Unitarian Communication Coordinators' Network) weekend at The Nightingale Unitarian Conference Centre in Great Hucklow.

This get-together will provide an opportunity for anyone interested in promoting the movement and their congregation. *How to get your congregation noticed* is the theme for the 2010 conference, so come and join others from around the country and share ideas, interests and concerns.

There will be presentations and practical sessions and plenty of time in which to enjoy a couple of days of easy company and invigorating discussion.

The conference is from Friday 19 to Sunday 21 February. Why not ask your congregation, society or District Association to sponsor your attendance? For details contact Valerie Walker via: www.uccn.org.uk or look up www.unitarian.org.uk/info/events.

— Valerie Walker

learn how to **GET YOUR CONGREGATION NOTICED** with Unitarian publicity **UCTCN** learn

19-21 Feb '10
Hucklow

do create

Sessions

- * visibility strategies
- * leaflet design/content
- * professional websites
- * keeping your website attractive
- * create a congregation promo video (Fri pm)

ask your congregation, society or district to sponsor you

more at: www.uccn.org.uk
or Valerie on 01296 613501 vwalker55@gmail.com

HARRIS MANCHESTER COLLEGE

CONFERENCE: TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF UNITARIAN MINISTRY

We are holding a Conference which, we hope, will appeal to all Ministers, Lay Pastors, Lay Leaders and Students for the Ministry from Monday June 21st to Wednesday, June 23rd. (Monday at 4.00 p.m. until Wednesday lunch). The cost will be £108, plus a small conference fee of £10.

This year our theme is "Towards a Theology of Unitarian Ministry." We will begin with a session on personal theology of ministry, facilitated by Rev Stephen Lingwood and Rev David Usher. Speakers will include Rev Andrew Hill on Unitarian traditions of ministry, as well as others to be announced.

The Annual Service at the Conference will be conducted by the Rev. Jeff Gould, Minister of Bury Chapel.

We choose to meet when the College is holding its end of term proceedings, which will include the annual meeting of honorary Governors and Friends on Tuesday afternoon.

Booking forms will be sent out in February to MOSA members. Please contact Jane Barraclough, preferably by email at the address listed below, if you have never been before and would like to come. We would like to see all those interested in the topic.

Jane Barraclough

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